



COMMANDO

Any Time, Any Place

Vol. 54, Issue 35

16th Special Operations Wing, Hurlburt Field, Fla.

Sept. 30, 2005



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the namesake
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The 16th
Civil
Engineer
Squadron
rushes to
fix the
water
main in
base
housing
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16th SVS hours

Commando Fitness Center
hours change: 6 a.m. – 2 p.m.
Monday through Friday

Weekend Forecast

Today	Saturday	Sunday
High 86, Low 73 – Partly cloudy	High 87, Low 72 – Isolated showers	High 86, Low 71 – Isolated showers



Nigerien Army Soldiers unload supplies from the Niger Air Force C-130 at Agades Airport on the edge of the Sahara Desert Aug. 19.
Photo by Capt. Tom Montgomery

Building bonds

By Capt. Tom Montgomery
AFSOC Public Affairs

A team of combat aviation advisors from the 6th Special Operations Squadron deployed to the edge of the Sahara desert to conduct a joint exchange training exercise with the fledgling Niger air force in August.

"The goal of the training during this deployment was for both air forces to enhance their already solid working relationship and promote an

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No power, no problem CES restores electricity twice

By Airman 1st Class
James Dickens
Public Affairs

The 16th Civil Engineer Squadron once again came to the rescue, and twice this week it was to ours.

A switch on the bus work burned up in the substation Monday, the location where all power comes into the base. The power was down base-wide for more than four hours.

The power comes to the base on an 115,000-volt transmission line from Gulf Power, said Ed Huffman, 16th CES.

It goes through their substation and enters ours at 12470 volts.

Next, the power is sent through a switch process and voltage regulators to the seven primary circuits on base.

It was at this switch where all the problems started.

"Our guys were out there working on this problem in the pouring rain to get the power back up as soon as possible," said Mr. Huffman.

"This power outage could have



Photo by Staff Sgt. Mareshah Haynes

Tech. Sgt. Arnold Cuevas, 16th Civil Engineer Squadron, (left) and Ed Huffman repair a circuit Tuesday in front of Building 90210.

lasted a lot longer without the help from the 16th Equipment Maintenance Squadron.

"Using hand tools and a portable generator, the 16th EMS Metal Technologies Shop was able to repair the burned part of the faulted switchgear, which would have taken days to replace."

Tuesday a completely new electricity problem surfaced.

One of the seven primary circuits

on base faulted and took out power for more than two hours around Bldg. 90210, said Mr. Huffman.

"We were able to fix the problem rather quickly by replacing a high voltage connection point," said Mr. Huffman.

"Thanks to Staff Sgt. Michael Cook, Senior Airman Jerred Crandon and the rest of the crew, power was restored in a timely manner in both cases."

Home of America's Air Commandos

POWs, MIAs – You're not forgotten

By Capt. Vince King
49th Fighter Wing Public Affairs

HOLLOMAN Air Force BASE, N.M. — Sept. 16 marks another day in history when we remember and commemorate the lives of our fellow Airmen, Sailors, Marines, Soldiers and civilians, and reflect upon their extraordinary sacrifices made on behalf of this country.

This is a time to remember the faces of the prisoners of war and the missing in action, recall the names of those still missing and to reaffirm the pledge our nation's leaders have made to account for every service member who did not come home.

When they joined the armed services, they dedicated their lives to protect all that made this country what it is today.

To heart, they took the true meaning of our heritage, to include the Armed Forces Code of Conduct. These articles address the situations

"Many endured unimaginable hardships as prisoners of war, while others remain unaccounted for. Our nation's senior leaders demand a full accounting."

and decision areas that, to some degree, all military personnel could encounter.

These articles include basic information which American POWs relied upon in their struggle to survive while captured and to continue their efforts to escape by all means necessary.

The men and women of this country have served bravely and with much confidence in various wars, to include the present fight in Afghanistan, Iraq and other theaters of the war on terror, knowing that, if they do fall in battle, our nation will do everything in its power to bring them home.

Throughout history, Americans have stood ready against those who

would threaten all that we believe in. We continue to defend the principles of freedom and liberty in wars throughout the world while helping others to accomplish and receive the same freedoms we hold dearly to our hearts.

Many endured unimaginable hardships as prisoners of war, while others remain unaccounted for. Our nation's senior leaders demand a full accounting.

Let us rededicate our efforts in honoring them and the sacrifices they made.

For one moment, I ask that all Airmen stop, pause and from the heart remember our fallen heroes and tell them, "You are not forgotten."

Hispanics: Strong, colorful threads in American fabric; heritage celebrated annually by decree

By Capt. Raul Flores
Hispanic-American
Heritage Council

LANGLEY AFB, Va. — In 1968, under formal declaration of the United States Congress, Hispanic Heritage observance began as a week-long celebration.

It later became a month-long observance in 1988 during President Ronald Reagan's administration,

which is now celebrated from Sept. 15 to Oct. 15.

Sept. 15 was chosen as the starting point for the observance because it is the anniversary of independence for five Latin American countries, which include Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua. Mexico and Chile celebrate their independence days on Sept. 16 and 18, respectively.

During this month, the United States celebrates the culture and traditions of its residents who trace their roots to Spain, Mexico and the Spanish-speaking nations of Central America, South America and the Caribbean. Furthermore, the observance draws from more than 20 nations, which have Mayan, Aztec, Spanish, Mexican and other bloodlines.

Therefore, the term 'Hispanic' describes a culture, not a nationality or race. The national theme for this year's Hispanic Heritage month observance is "Hispanic Americans: Strong and Colorful Threads in the American Fabric."

Today, Hispanics work as scientists, doctors, politician, lawyers, teachers, nurses, businesspersons, NASA astronauts and military service men and women. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, Hispanics constitute 14 percent of the nation's total population.

This doesn't include the 3.9 million residents of Puerto Rico. The bureau has projected that the Hispanic population of the United States will be 102.6 million by the year 2050. At that time, the group will constitute 24 percent

of the nation's total population.

America is a strong country because of our diversity and nowhere is it more evident than in the U.S. military.

Within the Langley community, there are people who can trace their Hispanic roots to Nicaragua, Mexico, Panama, Cuba, Venezuela, Puerto Rico, and a host of other nations. The Census Bureau estimates that about 53,000 Hispanic-origin people were on active duty in 2003 in the United States.

Furthermore, Hispanics can trace their U.S. military roots as far back as the Revolutionary War, the War of 1812, at the Alamo, the Mexican-American War, and the Civil War.

To date, there have been 40 Hispanic Medal of Honor recipients.

16th SOW Aimpoints

- Fight and win
- Take best care of our wingmen, families and resources
- Become the next generation of Air Force and Air Commando leaders

Disclaimer

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To reach the Commando staff, call 884-7464, e-mail commando@hurlburt.af.mil, or visit Bldg 90210, Rm 326.

Submitting articles

The deadline for submissions to the COMMANDO is noon Monday for briefs the week of publication. Articles may be submitted on IBM format computer disk or via electronic mail. Non-electronic submissions must be typed, double-spaced. All submissions must include the name and telephone number of a person to call.

Open Line

The Commander's Open Line is your direct line to the base commander for questions or suggestions about subjects of concern to the Hurlburt Field community. To receive a response, leave your name, unit and telephone number. Open lines of general interest will be printed in the COMMANDO. Other questions will be answered by letter or phone call. Remember, the quickest and most efficient way to resolve a problem is to talk directly to the agency responsible. This gives them an opportunity to help you and perhaps improve their process. However, if you're not satisfied with the answer you receive, feel free to give the commander a call at 884-OPEN (6736), or e-mail your concerns to commando@hurlburt.af.mil.

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DUI Tracker

Sept. 23-29 0 DUIs

This year: 19

DUIs for 2004: 42

Last DUI: 16th Helicopter Maintenance Squadron, Aug. 2

Days since last DUI:

16th OG...69

16th MXG...58

Totals are current as of Sept. 29.

Don't Drink and Drive. Call AADD at 884-8844

Potential saves this year: 492

The **Commander's Access Channel** provides up-to-date information for Hurlburt Field personnel and their families.

The CAC is available on base cable Channel 23.

For more information, call Public Affairs at 884-7464.

Saturday marks anniversary of Hurlburt's death

By Jamie Haig
Public Affairs

Saturday marks the 65th anniversary of when Hurlburt Field's namesake died.

At 1:15 p.m. Oct. 1, 1943, 1st Lt. Donald Hurlburt and five passengers were killed when the Lockheed AT-18 Hudson he was piloting, crashed onto the Auxiliary Field 9 runway shortly after take off.

After it was known by several names, such as the Eglin-Hurlburt Airdrome and Eglin Auxiliary Field 9, Hurlburt Field was officially named Jan. 13, 1948 in honor of Lieutenant Hurlburt, decorated World War II bomber pilot. In 1941, 22-year-old Lieutenant Hurlburt enlisted

in the Army and completed basic military training. Following his promotion to private first class, he attended preflight training school at Maxwell Field, Ala., then proceeded to the advanced flying school at Moody Field, Ga.

Upon graduation in July 1942, he was honorably discharged from the Army to accept a commission as a second lieutenant and assigned as a pilot in the 358th Bomb Group at Alamogordo Army Air Base, N.M.

In October 1942, he left for the European theater of operations. He flew several combat missions from Great Britain, earning him numerous medals. He was promoted to first lieutenant in June 1943, and one month later, he returned to the United States.

In August 1943, Lieutenant Hurlburt was assigned to the 1st Proving Ground Electronics Unit at Eglin Field, Fla.

Thirty years later, June 9, 1973, his widow, Hazel Hurlburt, was the guest of honor at the dedication of the first aircraft in the air park, a C-47 and a T-28. She was also present for the unveiling of a portrait of her late husband at the dedication of the Hurlburt Field Officers' Club. The portrait now hangs in the Soundside club.

For his military service, both overseas and at home, Lieutenant Hurlburt was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross and Air Medal with three oak leaf clusters. He also received the World War II Victory Medal, the



Courtesy photo

Hazel Hurlburt and Sgt. William Clark, 834th Security Policeman, welcome visitors to Hurlburt's Annual Open House.

American Defense Medal and the European-African-Middle Eastern Campaign Medal with one bronze star.

Operation Pillowcase: FSC helps spouses, children put deployment mysteries to bed; create family heirlooms using photographs, pillowcases

By 2nd Lt. Amy Gonzales
Public Affairs

They walked in with pillowcases and photos and walked out with new family heirlooms.

More than 30 spouses and children of deployed military members gathered at the Hurlburt Field Family Support Center Sept. 23 to conduct Operation Pillowcase.

The "operation" gets its name from the evening's main attraction. Each family brought in a photo and a pillowcase. Using a computer, specialized paper and a heat transfer machine, Tech. Sgt. Diane Thomas, 16th Mission Support Squadron, transferred the pictures onto a pillowcase. No longer an ordinary bed linen, the treasures are sent to loved ones downrange.

The event was part of the FSC's



Photo by 2nd Lt. Amy Gonzales

A child makes a keychain during Operation Pillowcase Sept. 23 at the family support center.

Hearts Apart program, which helps military families cope with a loved one's deployment. This was the second time Operation Pillowcase was executed.

The personalized pillowcases are a hit with the family members overseas. The last time the program was held, some spouses downrange received the pillowcases before others. Those who didn't get them were jealous and called their families asking where their pillowcases were, said Sergeant Thomas.

However, not all the recipients of the pillowcases use them for their intended purpose.

"They were hanging them up in their tents," said Sergeant Thomas.

Even though the pillowcases are what drew the families in, the real reason for the evening was to give military spouses a chance to share

experiences with each other. It also allowed the FSC staff to share information with the spouses.

One of the topics for the evening was the importance of deployment preparations.

"Talk with your spouse before they deploy to make sure everything is taken care of," said Chief Master Sgt. Joseph Slack, 16th Aircraft Maintenance Squadron first sergeant.

The topic shifted to the "emotional rollercoaster" associated with a deployment. One participant described how she feels tension between her and her husband every time a deployment draws near. However, she was not the only one.

"I call it military mode," said Cary Baker, whose husband is in the 16th Civil Engineer Squadron.

See **PILLOWCASE**, Page 9

Base CFC drive impacts local, national charities

By Master Sgt. Stuart Camp
Public Affairs

Now is the time for all Hurlburt Field Airmen to come to the aid of their fellow man.

The Combined Federal Campaign began Wednesday, and unit key workers will be canvassing for donors.

These key workers will be distributing contribution forms and listings with organizations seeking contributions from military people and Department of Defense civilians.

"There are 17,000 charities people can donate to,

some local, some national and some right here on base," said Capt. Chris Lardner, 16th Special Operations Wing project officer. "It's not so much the monetary goal - I'm focusing on getting people to help their fellow man."

Less than 40 percent gave during the 2004 CFC, said Captain Lardner. An increase in participation would impact the bottom line, as well. Last year, 36 percent of the base population contributed \$433,000 to the CFC.

"As usual, the ultimate goal is 100-percent contact," said Captain Lardner.

The campaign continues through Nov. 18, which

gives unit key workers enough time to reach that goal.

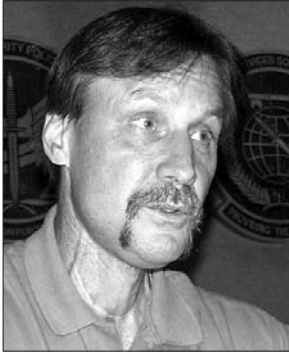
Rather than play on people's heartstrings and guilt people into giving, there's a pragmatic focus, as indicated by this year's theme, "Rebuilding Lives, Every One of Us."

"I can show you 15 charities that are taking care of homeless and needy people right here in Fort Walton Beach," said Master Sgt. William Keely, assistant CFC project officer. All the charities I give to impact my whole family.

"There is probably not one person on base who either has not directly benefited from one of the many charities or, at least, knows a friend, co-worker or family member who has," Sergeant Keely said.

Dagger Point:

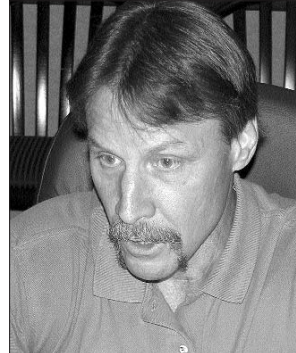
A candid interview with former Pararescueman and Task Force-Ranger veteran, retired Master Sgt. Tim Wilkinson



"It was a very intense situation for a relatively short period of time."



"Life can be a matter of millimeters and nanoseconds."



"I am a firm believer that God watches over fools, and I am here today because of it."

By Staff Sgt. Mareshah Haynes
Public Affairs

Sunday, Oct. 3, 1993. The mission: capture Somali warlord Mohamed Farah Aidid, who was purportedly meeting with his top lieutenants.

At 3:30 p.m. Army Rangers are airborne and enroute followed by a ground convoy. Soon after, one of the Blackhawk helicopters is hit by enemy fire and brought down. A search-and-rescue team ropes in to do what it can; two injured Rangers are extracted. The ground convoy attempts to make its way to the crash site, but comes under fierce fire.

Later, a second Blackhawk goes down. Two Special Forces troops die protecting the surviving pilot.

While the bullet-riddled ground convoy limps back to base with casualties and prisoners, the Rangers at the first crash site are left cut off and surrounded.

By the end of the battle, bodies of slain American Soldiers were being dragged through the streets and defiled. Those images played countless times on countless television screens around the world. Such was the scene that fateful day in Africa.

Tim Wilkinson, a retired Air Force master sergeant and former Pararescueman working at Hurlburt Field, was involved in the peacekeeping mission that escalated into a 15-hour firefight, the longest sustained firefight by U.S. forces since the Vietnam War.

The events of that day were documented in the movie "Blackhawk Down".

Wilkinson was part of the search

and rescue team tasked to get the crews out after being shot down. On the ground, he and a fellow Pararescueman, who had been wounded, set about treating and recovering the downed helicopter crew. Small arms fire and rocket-propelled grenades crisscrossed the streets.

As Rangers kept the hostiles at bay, Wilkinson raced through the fury to retrieve wounded and dead Soldiers. Even when shrapnel ripped skin from his face, he didn't falter.

Currently, Wilkinson is an instructor at the Air Force Special Operations School. Below is an excerpt from an interview he agreed to give the *Commando*.

Commando: How did your day start Oct. 3, 1993?

Wilkinson: How does the song go? 'It was a day like any other day, a small town in decay.' It was a Sunday morning, just a normal operational day in country. We got up around 6:30 a.m. or 7 a.m., made sure all of our equipment was ready to go, did some physical training, ate chow, just normal stuff around the hangar.

Commando: When did you know things were starting to go bad?

Wilkinson: Things didn't start to turn until the first Blackhawk went down. Prior to that, all the intelligence, the mission planning and the preparation went well. The initial execution of the operation went as planned, until Super Six-One (the main helicopter in the original operation) went down, in an effort to support the people around the target building. It came into a low hover and got hit by a rocket-propelled grenade

in the tail rudder. After that, our plan really started to degrade.

Commando: Do you feel that the movie "Blackhawk Down" was an accurate portrayal of what happened?

Wilkinson: In some respects. The geography was different, but similar. I thought the movie did a good job depicting the concern and the caring the folks involved had for each other.

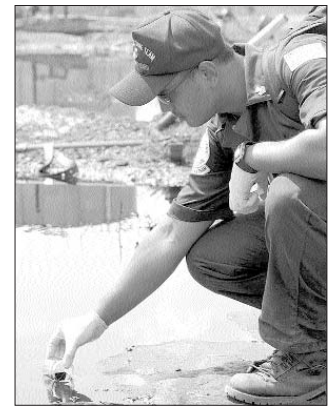
I thought it did a good job depicting the confusion that is really inherent in warfare and even complicated further by urban operations. I also think it did a very good job of portraying the brutality of warfare. Overall, I think for Hollywood, they did a reasonably good job.

Commando: How has living through that experience affected your everyday life?

Wilkinson: I think having experienced all of that, it gave me a much greater appreciation for what my predecessors, prior service men and women had gone through. It was a very intense situation for a relatively short period of time.

People who went through Vietnam and Korea, they weren't there for 24 hours, they were there for the duration, day in and day out, experiencing these significantly emotional events. I have an appreciation for their sacrifices, their contributions and how challenging all of that is. I had previously been through some similar operations, but nothing of that magnitude. It put things in very clear focus for me. I am a firm believer that God watches over fools, and I am here today because of it. I think about it

See **WILKINSON**, Page 9



U.S. Coast Guard photo by Petty Officer Mariana O'Leary

Petty Officer 1st Class Quoen Harris of Atlantic Strike Team based in Fort Dix, N.J., takes a sample Sept. 16 at the Sundown East oil spill site in Hurricane Katrina affected southeast Louisiana.

Brothers In Arms

Army

Iraqi security and coalition forces killed the second-most-wanted al Qaeda terrorist in Iraq, Abdallah Najim Abdallah Muhammad al-Juwari, otherwise known as Abu Azzam Tuesday.

"We continue to decimate the leadership of the al Qaeda in Iraq terrorist network and continue to disrupt their operations," said Maj. Gen. Rick Lynch, Multi-national Force Iraq.

Marines

KIN BLUE, OKINAWA, Japan – Pacific Ocean waves tossed and flipped 17 Marines in their Zodiac boats as they participate in the Basic Coxswain Skills Course Sept. 8-28. Upon completion of the course, the Marines from F Company, 2nd Battalion, 4th Marine Regiment will receive an additional military occupational specialty of combat rubber reconnaissance craft coxswain.

Navy

VIRGINIA BEACH, Va. – Chief of Naval Operations Adm. Mike Mullen visited Naval Air Station Oceana Sept. 27 and talked to Sailors about the future of the U.S. Navy in the 21st century.

"I'm blessed to be in a command position in a Navy this good," Admiral Mullen said. "The statistics look good and retention is high."

ST SIMON'S ON THE
SOUND
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Behind the Badge

Everything from neglecting pets to vandalizing dorms taking place

**By Tech. Sgt.
Parrish Hollingsworth
16th SFS**

Animal neglect

The 16th Security Forces Squadron was notified of a canine possibly being neglected due to not having adequate water, food and shelter. The complainant said the canine was left outside all the time, and the barking was a nuisance. Police patrols verified the canine had water, but no food and no shelter at the time of the response. The incident was turned over to the canine owner's first sergeant for further action.

Vandalism

Someone damaged several doors of a base dormitory by writing profanity on the doors with a marker.

Suspended license

An active-duty Airman was stopped on base for speeding. After checking his drivers' license, it was discovered his license had been suspended. The Airman was apprehended and after processing, he was released to his first sergeant.

Thefts

An Airman reported to security forces his wallet had been stolen from a locker at the Aderholt Fitness Center.

The locker wasn't locked.

A dorm resident notified security forces that several items had been taken from his room. After returning from a deployment, he entered his room to discover his Nintendo 64 and DVD player were missing, and his room was in disarray. Security forces continue to investigate this incident.

AWOL

A first sergeant notified security forces that one of his squadron members failed to return from leave and had been missing for several days. The Airman later turned himself in to his first sergeant. Security forces apprehended him for being absent without leave. The Airman was later released to his first sergeant for further processing.

Traffic complaint

An Airman telephoned

security forces to make a traffic complaint. The Airman said while approaching the East gate he was run off the road by small red vehicle with a black eight on the doors and multiple racing stickers. An investigation is on-going.

Help wanted

If you have any information concerning any of the events under investigation, call the security forces control center at 884-7777.

Did you know?

Florida law and base regulations require your license plate to be affixed to the rear of your vehicle; this also includes temporary license plates. Also, license plates must be visible from the rear of the vehicle. Dark license plate covers are unauthorized. Reference *Air Force Instruction 31-204, HF Sup 1*.

Special OPERATORS

The following Airmen were selected for senior airman below the zone:

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**CENTURY 21/ISLAND VIEW
CS/LISTINGS
593850
5 X 11.66**

Female combat crew takes historic flight

By Capt. Michael Johnson
386th Air Expeditionary Wing
Public Affairs

SOUTHWEST ASIA — A crew of six Airmen at a forward-deployed location climbed aboard a C-130 Hercules together recently for the first time in their careers.

But something distinguished this mission from others they had flown — it was the first time an all-female C-130 crew flew a combat mission.

Capt. Carol Mitchell, aircraft commander; 1st Lt. Siobhan Couturier, pilot; Capt. Anita Mack, navigator; Staff Sgt. Josie Harshe, flight engineer; Tech. Sgt. Sigrid Carrero-Perez and Senior Airman Ci Ci Alonzo, loadmasters, are all permanently assigned to the 43rd Airlift Wing at Pope Air Force Base, N.C.

Currently, they're deployed to the 737th Expeditionary Airlift Squadron flying cargo and troops in and out of Iraq, Afghanistan and the Horn of Africa. While some would call their mission "historic," they feel this mission should be recognized like every other flight — a successful combat mission.

"I enjoyed flying with this crew," said Captain Mitchell. "It took a long time for women to become accepted as aircrew members, and now that we are, we would be taking a step back by singling ourselves out rather than blending in with the rest of the Air Force."

Airman Alonzo agrees.

"It was a great experience not many females can say they've had," she said. "However, I don't believe the Air Force should seek out all-female crews — instead, we should focus on experience."

"(The Air Force) should have the best crews they can put together. Nothing other than qualification and ability

should be considered," said Captain Mack.

Not only did this all-female crew fly together for the first time, 6,800 miles from home station, but they flew the mission on a Vietnam-era airplane — a significance the crew didn't miss.

"Our (aircraft) was a 1962 model. (It) came off the line when women weren't accepted as C-130 aircrew, let alone in combat," said Sergeant Harshe.

After the excitement of this all-female C-130 crew flying the first combat mission together wore off, they focused on what really mattered.

"(What matters is) knowing we're making a difference and seeing it with every mission we fly," said Airman Alonzo.

"(It's also) moving troops into the theater where they're needed, seeing the excitement and relief on the faces of the guys and gals we take out of theater who have been there for six months to a year and are on their way home to their loved ones."

During the mission, the crew transported 151 Marines and their equipment. Another thing they all agreed upon, the mission was a true experience.

"It was a fun thing to be able to say you did, if only once. Not that it's better, this was just different, and probably won't happen for us again anytime soon just because of the sheer numbers," said Sergeant Harshe.

Captain Mitchell said one additional benefit of this all-female flight was gaining a different perspective.

"One way to avoid (com-
placency) is to mix the crews up a little, fly with some different people to get a different perspective," she said. "And what better way to mix the crews up than by putting all the girls on the same crew?"

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PILLOWCASE,
Continued from Page 3

She went on to describe how her husband has to emotionally detach himself to a certain extent prior to deploying so he can focus on the mission overseas.

Debby Lundblad, FSC community readiness consultant, reassured the group that such feelings are normal and explained the "emotional cycle of deployment" to the group.

"It's nice to know you're not the only one out there," said Mrs. Baker.

Chief Slack tried to help the

women understand what their spouses are going through overseas.

"Their whole life is entirely different than it is here," he said.

The women talked for more than an hour about different issues.

"If it wasn't for this and for me substitute teaching in school, I would be left on my own," said Melanie Walker, whose husband is deployed. "At least you've got that shoulder (to lean on) when you're losing your mind."

The next Hearts Apart event, called "Hobo Night," is Oct. 21. For more information, call 884-6797.

WILKINSON,
Continued from Page 4

everyday, and the families of those who are no longer with us, and I say a little prayer for them.

Commando: While you were in combat, what kept you going?

Wilkinson: While events are rapidly happening there is a lot of intensity, you really focus on what it is you need to do. It was a sense of duty, a sense of mission and holding up my end of the deal as I had been trained to do, that my teammates were counting on me to do, that kept me going.

Afterward, when you have a chance to reflect, then you get into some of the more spiritual realms. Life can be a matter of millimeters and nanoseconds. You get clipped by a piece of shrapnel or a grazing shot because you had your head turned, but if you had of turned your head a nanosecond earlier, it could have taken off half of your face. Why those things happen the way the do, it certainly gives one cause for reflection.

Editor's Note: Mr. Wilkinson was awarded the Air Force Cross for his heroic actions that day, becoming the first enlisted person to receive it since 1975.

OPS, *Continued from Page 6*

ARMED FORCES COMM INC
CS READY ALREADY
609700
3 X 7.00

DAVID G
THOMPSON/GEICO
CS AUTO INS
610493
2 X 7.00



Courtesy photo

An MQ-1 Predator takes off from Creech Air Force Base, Nev. during the operational test of the latest upgrade to the Predator.

Predators fly first four-ship sorties

CREECH AIR FORCE BASE, Nev. — The latest upgrade to the MQ-1 Predator, known as the Multi-Aircraft Control, or MAC system, entered operational testing with the first two-ship and four-ship Predator sorties being flown over a four-day period.

Testers performed two-ship sorties Sept. 12 and 13 and progressed to four-ship sorties Sept. 14 and 15.

During these sorties, members from the 53rd Test and Evaluation Group, Detachment 4, tested the MAC ground control station on its ability to enable a single pilot to simultaneously control four Predator aircraft over the skies of southern Nevada.

"Our pilots were impressed with the technology integration, human-machine interface and situational awareness provided by the (system)," said Lt. Col. Steven Tanner, 53rd TEG, Det. 4 commander. "We spent six months developing comprehensive training and safety plans to ensure that these initial MAC four-ship test sorties were successful."

"Once we fully train our pilots and sensor operators on this new technology, we will initiate the process of evaluating the operational capabilities of the MAC system," Colonel Tanner said.

The system has the potential to bring long-endurance, concentrated Predator firepower to a dynamic battle-

field scenario. The system allows one pilot to actively engage a target, while three other Predators are flying nearby on standby status.

While one pilot controls all four Predators, sensor operators assigned to each Predator are able to collect data using the sensor ball, located on the front of the aircraft, Colonel Tanner said.

Operators from the 53rd Wing at Eglin Air Force Base, and the 57th Wing at Nellis AFB, Nev., will conduct operational test missions with the MAC system during the next few months in order to evaluate the new two and four-ship Predator mission capabilities.

"MAC represents a quantum leap in Unmanned Aerial Vehicle technology and has the potential to dramatically increase Predator availability and lethality," said Col. William Coutts, 53rd Wing commander.

"The combined 53rd and 57th team is doing an excellent job, and I am optimistic that MAC technology will translate into increased combat capability for combatant commanders."

The MQ-1 Predator is a medium-altitude, long endurance, remotely piloted aircraft that carries the Hellfire missile.

Its primary mission is interdiction and conducting armed reconnaissance against critical, perishable targets, according to the Air Force. (AFPN)

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Visit the Hurlburt Field Homepage

www.hurlburt.af.mil

Hurlburt Happenings

Sept. 30, 2005

COMMANDO

11

Military Cultural course

The U.S. Special Operations School invites all Special Operators to attend the Cross Cultural Communications Course Oct. 31 – Nov. 4.

The course is designed for personnel preparing to live or deploy overseas, who work with international military personnel, and those with a professional or analytical interest in international studies.

For more information, call Capt. Apryl Cymbal at 884-4472 or Joyce Weber at 884-4731. Also, visit <https://www.hurlburt.af.mil/milonly/tenantunits/jsou>.

Community Faith in the Foxhole

All personnel are invited to attend the Faith in the Foxhole prayer luncheon noon to 1 p.m. Thursday at the base chapel. Capt. Kenneth Mercier, military equal opportunity, will be the guest speaker. Free lunch is provided for those who attend.

Library closure

The base library will be closed Monday through Wednesday. It's expected to return to normal operations Thursday.

Art exhibit

The base library is hosting an art exhibit and demonstration 5:30-7 p.m. Oct. 7. This new event, "An Evening with the Artist", will feature Ursula Ronneker. Light refreshments will be served. Artwork will be available for purchase with half of the proceeds donated to the victims of Hurricane Katrina. For more information, call 884-6266.

Boxing match

Hey boxing fans, get your front row seat at J.R. Rockers to see the tie-breaking match of "Tarver versus Jones 3." This live event will be showing on the big screen at Rockers Saturday. Doors open at 6 p.m., the fight begins at 8 p.m. and seating is on a "first come, first served" basis. Get advance tickets: \$7.50 for club members, \$12.50 for non-members. Cost is \$15 at the door. No children under the age of 16 will be admitted.

DTS system changes

No travel reservations can be made through the Defense Travel System through Monday due to computer system changes.

However, orders will continue to be processed through DTS with air, lodging and rental car costs entered manually. During this period, tickets



Photo by Master Sgt. Kevin Owen

Dirty job

An Airman for the 16th Civil Engineer Squadron, works on a broken water main in base housing Monday. The broken pipe happened on Bakke Street and left 40 homes without water for more than eight hours.

for DTS-generated orders for travel must be ticketed by the commercial ticket office.

When the change is complete, Organizational Defense Travel Administrators will be notified to have their organizations resume normal reservation processes. For more information, e-mail 16cpts.dts.help@hurlburt.af.mil.

AF club membership

Air Force Clubs will be awarding more than 100 \$1,000 prizes during the "2005 Grand Giveaway" club membership drive now through Nov. 30. New members and current members alike will be entered into the drawing automatically.

Hurlburt Field's current members may compete to win free dues for one year, just by recruiting the most new members during the recruitment cycle. With each member recruited, current members will automatically receive an entry into a drawing for a \$250 gift certificate redeemable at the information, tickets and travel office. Newly recruited members at Hurlburt will be entered into a separate drawing for a \$250 gift certificate. For more information, call 884-6469.

RED HORSE reunion

The 40th Annual RED HORSE Reunion will be held Oct. 16-19 at the Okaloosa Island Ramada Beach Resort. Events include business meetings, a birthday celebration, a combat dining in, military banquet and demonstrations.

For registration information, visit www.redhorseassociation.org. For reunion information, call Capt. Christine Gentry at 881-3386, DSN 641-3386, or by e-mail christine.gentry@hurlburt.af.mil, or email the editor@redhorseassociation.org.

Celebration of life

The fifth annual Celebration of Life luncheon, "An Afternoon with the

Stars", for breast cancer survivors will be held Oct. 14 at the Eglin Officers' Club. Survivors who are military beneficiaries are invited to attend. To make reservations, call the Eglin Breast Health Services no later than Wednesday.

CTO changes

Effective Saturday Hurlburt Field will begin to transfer its ticketing services from Bay Area Travel to Wingate Travel.

Stand-by personnel will be on call for emergency travel only. All reservations must be made by calling or e-mailing Bay Area Travel; after Saturday, make reservations through Wingate Travel by calling 884-4771.

The Defense Travel System will be active for generating orders only. No airline reservation can be made until the system interface is complete.

Also, new travel rates for fiscal year 2006 aren't available. Those traveling in October can't make reservations until the new rates become available. Normal business is expected to resume Oct. 11. For more information, call 884-6619.

Hurlburt Spouse's

The Hurlburt Spouses Club October luncheon will be held at 10:30 a.m., October 20th at the Soundside Club. The cost is \$11 for members and \$13 for non-members. The luncheon will feature Jesse Bustamente from the Zoo in Gulf Breeze. She will be accompanied by some special critters and will be able to share information about zoo happenings during the fall and winter season. Childcare will be provided for \$3 per hour/child. Participants must register by Oct. 14. For more information or to register, call Karin Heaton at 515-0371.

Eglin Spouses' Club

The Eglin Officers' Spouses' Club is holding their 20th Annual Fall Craft Bazaar 9 a.m. – 4 p.m. Saturday, at the Niceville Community Center.

At the movies



Prices are \$3.50 for adults and \$1.75 for children 6 years old and up. Movies start at 7 p.m. unless otherwise indicated.

Hurlburt Field – 884-7648

Friday, Sunday – Four Brothers (R) After their adoptive mother is murdered during a grocery store hold-up, the Mercer brothers – hotheaded Bobby, hard-edged Angel, family man and businessman Jeremiah, and hard rocking Jack – reunite to take the matter of her death into their own hands. As they track down the killer, they quickly realize that their old ways of doing business have new consequences.

2 p.m. and 7 p.m. Saturday – Valiant (G) A lowly wood pigeon named Valiant, overcomes his small size to become a hero in Great Britain's Royal Air Force Homing Pigeon Service during World War II. The RHPs advanced the Allied cause by flying vital messages about enemy movements across the English Channel, whilst evading brutal attacks by the enemy's Falcon Brigade.

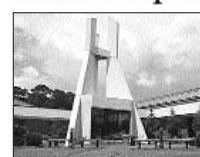
Eglin – 882-1066

Friday, Sunday – The Skeleton Key (PG-13) Caroline is a hospice worker who cares for the ailing and the elderly, a job designed to atone for her own mistake for ignoring her dying father in the past, when she had been a rock 'n' roll manager. After her latest charge passes away, Caroline takes a job in Louisiana, caring for Ben, a stroke-victim who is bed-ridden and cannot speak. But Caroline becomes suspicious of the house, and Ben's cold wife, Violet only adds to the creepy atmosphere. After acquiring a skeleton key, Caroline makes her way into a secret room within the attic where she discovers hair, blood, bones, spells, and other instruments for practicing hoodoo.

Saturday – Undiscovered (PG-13) An aspiring New York model falls in love with a struggling musician when they suddenly cross paths on a subway train. Having achieved success as a model, she decides to move to L.A. to launch an acting career. With the support of her acerbic agent and sometimes surrogate mom, she lands a spot in a highly sought after acting class where she befriends another would-be actress. While out on the town discovering the music scene, the aspiring model again crosses paths with the struggling musician. The two girls decide to help him and set out to create some L.A. style hype to get him noticed. As his profile rises, so do the demands of his budding new career.

(Editor's note: Movies are subject to change. Telephone numbers are provided for patrons to confirm dates.)

Base chapel



Catholic Mass
Saturday, 5:30 p.m.
Sunday, 7:15 and 10 a.m.
Confessions: Saturday, 4:30 to 5 p.m., or by request
Youth: 5 p.m. Sunday
Religious Education: September – May

Protestant Services
Sunday, 8:30 a.m. (Traditional worship)
11:30 a.m. (Contemporary worship)

Religious Education: August – May
Youth and Singles groups available
Jewish Services (882-2111)
Sabbath services: Friday, 7:30 p.m., Eglin Chapel Center
Muslim Services (882-2111), Eglin Chapel Center
Jumuah: Friday, 12:45 p.m.
For more information, call 884-7795.



To check out Air Force TV or Radio News visit: <http://af.feedroom.com> or www.af.mil/news and click on TV or radio to find out what's happening around the Air Force.

Airman Against Drunk Driving

For a free, confidential ride home, call AADD at 884-8844.

Don't drink and drive.



24-hour Fraud, Waste and Abuse hotline:

Hurlburt Field – 884-6322
Air Force – (800) 538-8429
Department of Defense – (800) 424-9098

Bowling special

Hurlburt Lanes is offering "Silver Strikers Day" each Thursday in September. Bowlers, age 60 and over, are eligible for special rates 9 a.m. – 4 p.m. Games and shoe rentals are 75 cents each. All specials are subject to lane availability. For more information, call 884-6941.

Child care updates

Hurlburt Field's family child care resource and referral coordination is now decentralized and handled by the respective facility. For more information, including enrollment or the waiting list, call the child development center at 884-6664; family child care office at 581-1207 or youth center's school age program at 884-6355.

Parenting seminar

The child development center is hosting a free parenting seminar, "Developing Character and Values in Your Children," 3:30 p.m. Oct. 7 at the youth

center. For more information, call Capt. A. J. Lugo at 884-2703.

Hispanic heritage calendar

A luncheon will be held at 11 a.m. today at the Reef. Youth Cultural Day will be held at 3:30 p.m. Oct. 7 at the youth center. For more information, call Capt. A. J. Lugo at 884-2703.

Classes

Embry-Riddle university

Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University offers a business management degree. The bachelor of science degrees in technical management allows for military members in any career field to transfer in credit for their military experience. ERAU also offers an accelerated format of five, nine-week terms, and courses can be completed online or in-residence. ERAU is located in the base education

center, Building 90220.

Okaloosa-Walton College

Enrollment is through Oct. 20 for the fall term three fast-track classes offered by Okaloosa-Walton College at Hurlburt Field, Eglin Air Force Base and other college sites. A course list is available at www.owc.edu. Most classes begin the week of Oct. 13; a series of weekend courses is also offered. Individuals may enroll in-person at any OWC site. For more information, call OWC Hurlburt at 884-6296 or OWC Eglin at 678-1717.

University of West Florida

The University of West Florida will maintain and staff an office at the Hurlburt Field Education Services Center, Building 90220. The office will be open 8:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m. Tuesdays and Thursdays and 9:30 a.m. – 12:20 p.m. Wednesdays. Students can make an appointment to see an advisor by calling 884-2723 or 863-6569.

Week in History

The following is a list of extraordinary events that occurred this week in military history:

Sept. 28, 1912 – Cpl. Frank Scott became the first enlisted fatality in Signal Corps Aviation.

Oct. 1, 1943 – First Lt. Donald

Wilson Hurlburt dies in aircraft crash on takeoff during a local mission on Auxiliary Field 9 at the Eglin Field Military Reservation.

Oct. 1, 1992 – The Air Force Special Operations Command assumes control of Hurlburt Field

from the Air Mobility Command.

Oct. 1, 1992 – The 15th Special Operations Squadron is activated to fly the MC-130H Combat Talon II.

Oct. 1, 1993 – The 1st Special Operations Wing was re-designated as the 16th Special Operations Wing.

Oct. 1, 2003 – Air Force Special Operations Command merged with the U.S. Air Force Combat Rescue and grew by more than a third in



Combat Talon II

personnel, twice the number of weapon systems and it gained ownership of Moody Air Force Base, Ga.

MILITARY MEDIA
CS/STATIONED LOC
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EGLIN BASE EXCH/AAFEES
CS PET SHOW
609721
3 X 5.75

LRS 2 stomps CES 1 with second-half push

By Master Sgt. Stuart Camp
Public Affairs

A second-half turn-around pushed the 16th Logistics Readiness Squadron 2 flag football team over 16th Civil Engineer Squadron 1 Tuesday.

Chad Hesler, 16th LRS quarterback, engineered three touchdowns in the second half, and the LRS defense clamped down on the Engineers.

The 16th LRS trailed 14-6 at the break, and Hesler's half-time speech focused on execution. The team responded by scoring an 18-yard strike to Mike DeCruz and Eric Dommert's interception to halt 16th CES's first possession.

"The first half stunk," Hesler said post-game. "The defense held 'em. I liked the aggressiveness on defense,

and we made some catches in the second half."

Hesler threw for 136 yards, ran for an additional 19 and threw one interception. Ralph Fuentes, 16th CES quarterback, dominated the 16th LRS defense early in the game. A pair of moderate gains on the ground set up a 56-yard touch-down pass to Michael Cook on the 16th CES first drive. Fuentes converted the point-after try.

After John Wates intercepted a Hesler pass three plays later, Fuentes connected with Mike Fleck for a touch-down and Cook for the PAT and a 14-0 16th CES advantage. The 16th LRS marched down the field, only to end with Tyler Collins, 16th CES, picking off Hesler's pass into the end zone. In post-game review, players tried to explain the difference in the 16th CES

performance between the halves.

"The LRS defense changed strategy, and that affected us in a way we had to adjust," said CE's Antonio Payne.

Fuentes, who ran for 20 yards and threw for 104 yards but two interceptions, was replaced by Payne late in the game.

"We weren't effective in the second half," he said. "The threat of us running was taken away by play selection."

16th MDG 34, 16th MOS 6

The 16th Medical Group whipped the 16th Maintenance Operations Squadron 34-6 Tuesday.

Victor Colon scored four touchdowns for the Medical Group – including a 40-yard interception return.

Jason Roth tallied MOS's lone touch-down on an eight-yard run mid-way through the second half.

Falcon's comeback falls short in 38-35 loss

By Wayne Amann
Air Force Academy
Public Affairs

SALT LAKE CITY —

Two touchdown drives engineered by backup quarterback Adam Fitch late in the fourth quarter were not enough in the Falcons' 38-35 loss to the University of Utah in front of 41,935 spectators here Sept. 22.

"We could'a, should'a won, it's the same thing I said last week," Falcons head coach Fisher DeBerry said. "We just didn't play all the time. We have to play 60 minutes when we play the defending conference champions."

Utah (3-1, 1-1) rebounded from its first loss since 2003. The Utes went 12-0 in 2004 while capturing the Mountain West Conference title. Despite losing six offensive starters, including quarterback Alex Smith who was the No.1 pick in the 2005 NFL draft, Utah did not have to rebuild — they simply reloaded.

Before a nationally televised audience on ESPN, Air Force opened strong when fullback Ryan Williams ran for 34 yards on one carry and put the Falcons up 7-0 with a 1-yard touchdown run. Utah countered with Smith's understudy from last year,

Brian Johnson. The sophomore signal caller took his team 69 yards in 11 plays, the last being a 1-yard touch-down by Johnson. After an exchange of punts, Falcon quarterback Shaun Carney flipped a screen pass to wide receiver Jason Brown who tiptoed down the sideline for 29 yards to the Utah 7-yard line. Williams punched it over for the touchdown and a 14-7 lead.

Johnson drew the Utes even again with his second 1-yard touchdown run set up by consecutive gains of 12, 16, 18, 13 and 13 yards. The next sequence of events played out like a bad sitcom.

Air Force free safety Andy Gray recovered a fumbled Donny Heaton punt, but the Falcon offense failed to make a first down. Heaton's ensuing rugby-style punt was blocked and recovered by Utah on the Air Force 33. Six plays later, Johnson added his third 1-yard touchdown.

On the first play of Air Force's next possession, halfback Kip McCarthy fumbled a Carney pitch and Utah recovered on the Falcon 12. From there, Johnson hit wide receiver Travis LaTendresse in the end zone. The Falcons settled down on their next drive thanks, in part, to a spectacular 27-yard reception by Brown on an under-



Courtesy photo

Air Force quarterback Shaun Carney looks for running room as fullback Ryan Williams, 45, blocks University of Utah defenders.

thrown pass to put Air Force deep in Ute territory.

"We had chances to make plays on all sides of the ball when we needed to," Brown said. "When we didn't, Utah took full advantage."

The drive culminated with a Carney-to-Chad Hall-to-Greg Kirkwood reverse for a 10-yard touchdown run. Utah's Dan Beardall drilled a 46-yard field goal with 1:06 left in the second quarter to stake his team to a 31-21 halftime cushion.

Their lead ballooned to 17

points in the third quarter when Johnson, who had plenty of time to throw when the Falcons defense used a three-man rush, hit wideout Brian Hernandez for a 60-yard touchdown bomb.

Enter Fitch. The senior rallied his troops with scoring drives of 86 and 80 yards, resulting in a 15-yard touch-down pass to Brown and a 4-yard touchdown run by Fitch. Down by three with 1:08 to play, a Falcons' onside kick was caught cleanly by Utah.

In the bleachers

5K run

A Commando 5K Run will be held Oct. 15. The check-in time is 7:30 a.m., and the race begins at the Aderholt Fitness Center. Register no later than noon Oct. 14. For more information, call 884-6884 or 884-4412.

Tennis club

The Hurlburt Field Tennis Club meets 5 to 7 p.m. every Wednesday at the tennis courts beside the U.S. Air Force Special Operations School. The tennis club is an informal group of people interested in playing tennis and requires one can of new tennis balls to join. The play will consist of eight game pro sets with no add scoring. The club is open to all Hurlburt Field personnel. For more information, e-mail Vicki Helton at vicki.helton@hurlburt.af.mil.

Rugby season

The Okaloosa Rugby Football Club is looking for new players at all levels of experience for the spring and summer seasons. For more information, call John Colletta at 882-1855 or e-mail john.colletta@eglin.af.mil.

Fitness classes

The Riptide and Aderholt fitness centers host many classes to fit your fitness goals; they include: body sculpt, yoga, step, spinning (cycle), cardio sculpt, and pilates. Call the Riptide Fitness Center at 881-5121 or the Aderholt Fitness Center at 884-6884 for the time, day and location of classes.

Intramural constitution

Intramural sports participants must be one of the following: active-duty military at Hurlburt Field, Department of Defense civilians here, non-appropriated funds employees here, dependents must be age 18 and older and graduated high school or a retiree here. Note: Temporary-duty personnel and dependents must play for the unit to which they or their sponsor is assigned; retirees have the option to play for the unit from which they retired or in which they are working. Individuals from the other bases won't be permitted to participate if their bases offer the same program. For more information, call Jim Harriott at 884-6949.

Varsity soccer

Hurlburt Field varsity soccer practices are held at 5:30 p.m. each Tuesday. The season runs from September to April and includes an end-of-season tournament. Interested individuals should show up ready to play, or call Ryan Archambault at 884-4359 or Shawn Robinson at 586-3133.

Golf tournament

The Gator Lakes Golf Club is hosting a golf tournament Oct. 22-23. Tee times will commence at 7 a.m. Saturday and the shotgun start will be at 7 a.m. Sunday. Cost is \$25 for Gator Lakes members, \$30 for Eglin members, \$40 for non-members and \$45 for guests. For more information, call 881-2251.

Flag-football standings

National Conference

Team	W	L
16 LRS 2	2	0
16 MDG	2	0
823rd RHF	2	0
16 SVS	1	0
16 CES 1	1	1
16 CES 2	1	1
USCG	1	1
23 STS	0	1
16 HMXS	0	2
16 SFS	0	2
16 MOS	0	2

American Conference

Team	W	L
16 CS	2	0
16 LRS 1	2	0
16 CMS	1	0
16 MSS/AFSOC	1	0
25 IOS	1	1
16 EMS	1	1
4 SOS	0	0
AMMO	0	1
16 CPTS	0	1
16 OSS	0	1
16 AMXS	0	1
16 SOS	0	2

AFRICA, Continued from Page 1

open exchange of ideas," said Jerry Klingaman, director of strategy and plans for the 6th SOS.

Niger is in the middle of the Trans-Saharan region of Africa and is an important ally in the fight against international terrorism, said Gail Dennise Mathieu, United States Ambassador to Niger.



A 6th Special Operations Squadron rotary-wing combat aviation advisor discusses infiltration and exfiltration operations with two Niger Air Force helicopter crewmen as their Mi-17 approaches to practice remote landing zone operations outside of Niamey, Niger, Aug. 17.

Terrorist groups and their supporters have funneled cash, recruits and weapons across the vast stretches of the Sahara, a desert as large as the continental United States, said Mr. Klingaman.

"We're maintaining skills that are crucial to one of our main missions in the 6th; combat aviation advisory operations," said a major who was deputy mission commander. "We're not only maintaining our (advisory) skills, we're also tending a great relationship we enjoy with the Niger Air Force," he said. Names of special operations forces overseas are withheld for security reasons.

Airmen of the 6th SOS are experts in aviation advisory operations to all corners of the globe, are fluent in dozens of languages and are instructors on numerous foreign aircraft.

Niger's Air Force, less

than two years old, has about 300 airmen and 10 flyable aircraft, including a C-130 Hercules and a Russian built Mi-17 multi-role helicopter. The Air Commandos from Hurlburt Field can fly and maintain both.

"Our Air Force is very small, but we are improving, and we are learning. It is extremely important for us to continue working with the United States Air Force," said Col. Hassan Mossi, Niger Air Force vice chief of staff. "We love working with these guys (6th SOS) because they understand our needs as airmen, they understand our national culture and they make an effort to speak our language." French is the official language of Niger.

The Hurlburt team and the Nigeriens flew the C-130 and Mi-17 extensively during the exercise, practicing tactical skills such as low-level navigation, and remote landing zone infiltration.

"They've come a long way with how they use their Mi-17; doing more missions and exploring the capabilities of the aircraft," said a major in the 6th SOS. The major learned to pilot the Mi-17 in a former communist bloc country now on much friendlier terms with the United States.

"He (the major) taught me much better tactical approaches, spending much less time in a vulnerable position as we descended," said Capt. Ibrahim Almoustapha, a Nigerien Mi-17 pilot.

"We learned a lot about crew coordination which is very difficult," said Capt.

Amirou Abdulkader, also an Mi-17 pilot.

The exercise wasn't all about flying however.

"In addition to pilots and navigators, we've brought along other aircrew members, maintainers, medical personnel, security forces, flight engineers and engine mechanics among others," said a technical sergeant who was the team sergeant, or lead NCO, for this operation.

General Foglesong visited Niger with the Air Commandos and the Nigeriens aboard the C-130. Ambassador Mathieu shared the general's sentiment.

"I wish I could have that unit (6th SOS) in every country every day of the week," said Gen. Robert Foglesong, United States Air Forces in Europe commander and responsible for air operations in Europe and most of Africa.

"The 6th provides exactly what the Nigeriens want," she said. "The Nigeriens have always said they have the motivation but sometimes they need a little help."

The 6th SOS team requires very little outside support and leaves a very small footprint in the local area.

"(This unit has) an ability to lash-up with these partner nations in such a way as to be very user friendly," said General Foglesong. "We must remember that we can't fight trans-national terrorism individually. Collective security is vital to the next decade of democracy."

The U.S. government is engaging in a multi-faceted effort, called the Trans-Saharan Counter Terrorism Initiative, to deny terrorists



A 6th Special Operations Squadron Mi-17 helicopter pilot and other combat aviation advisors from the unit brief Niger Air Force security forces the upcoming mission to practice calling in helicopter recovery while in the field as part of a large scale mass casualty exercise at Niamey International Airport Aug. 24.



Photos by Capt. Tom Montgomery

Capt. Diallo Moctar, Niger Air Force, and the 6th Special Operations Squadron mission commander for the training exercise with Niger, navigate the savannah just south of the Sahara Desert onboard the Niger Air Force C-130 Aug. 19.

any safe haven they may have enjoyed in the region. The goal of TSCTI is to improve the capabilities of Trans-Saharan governments so they can effectively prevent or remove terrorist threats themselves.

The military component of TSCTI is called Operation Enduring Freedom - Trans Sahara.

"It is a very positive thing to have good military-to-military cooperation between Niger and the U.S. as we help build a stronger partner in the Global War on Terrorism," said Ambassador Mathieu.

The Air Commandos are culturally and linguistically trained to earn the respect of partner nation citizens and military forces.

"The Nigeriens don't have

all of the tools and parts they need, but they are very creative and find ways to fix things. We have to be flexible and understand that they do things very differently than how we are taught in our Air Force," said the enlisted maintenance advisor on the team.

The exercise kept Airmen from both Air Forces busy both in the air and in the briefing rooms. At the end, the two Air Forces had practiced numerous aviation tactics, aircraft and perimeter security, airbase defense, detailed maintenance procedures, search and rescue operations, and a full scale mass casualty scenario that involved the national hospital, emergency response teams, and the C-130 and Mi-17.